T

29,
Fitzroy Square,
W.

OT 1909

My Violet,

Are you in London?
Shall I come & see
you? We are
all back now.
How are you?
Adrian says he thinks he
met you today, but couldn't
make up his mind. She
[illegible] smiled - was it you, or

a prostitute?

Yrs.

NYPL

Monday.

29. Ebury Square.

Sunday. Nov 1907

My Violet,

You should have had the decency
to write from your retirement.
Dont you see that, having cast this
wrabrage when you put me in a very delicate
position — so far as being compromised?
with letters it concerned? Suppose
you just sniff, (Oh that tiresome
chit, again), & roll a ball for
your dog to gnaw out of my
sentiments, how can I proceed without
caution?

How are you? where are you?
If in London, would you like to see me?

I cant help hoping that you're alone at
Welwyn, & that it is pouring as it
is here, & that you cant go out
for fear of the rheumatics, & the
leaves are sticking to the window
panes. You will then have time
to think over your wasted youth, &
friendships thrown away.
We are so much ottoned by this election,
& the rain, that we have to dine
out in a little restaurant on Soho,
where prostitutes love young men.
The wickedness of London on a day like this
is inconceivable; one imagines vice
smelling in stuffy rooms.
I suppose you have been going everywhere —
to the Grafton Galleries, & how that Clive
Bernard Shaw play.

is in the van of aesthetic criticism, I hear a great deal about pictures. I dont think them so good as books. But why ask the Duchesses are invited by the host-impressionists. a modest simple set of painters, innocent even of indecency. I cant conceive. However one must not say that they are like other pictures, only better, because that makes everyone angry. You will be glad to hear that I am seething with fragments of love, morals, Ethics, Comedy tragedy, & so on; & every morning pour them out into a manuscript book. Never that I would be review again: do you think it would be indecent to put Count Mirina upon the Stage. & Count Fisher, & the Quaker? Such riches as we have in our relations it seems a pity to neglect.

One of this Thomases most excitable lunatics — the one who left when the Saw me — has been almost dying, but is now better again. This Thomas says that these excitements are the wine of

Ufs. This bears out my theory, based on Aunt Fisher, & all the other sepulchral women, that what people like is feeling - it dont matter what. Last Sunday I stayed with the Cornishes at Eton, & heard the most singular conversation carried on by old Mrs C. alone over Evelyn Bodley's head. What is love? What is vice? What is religion? "Oh, d'you know that Virginia has the most lovely little sons?" She has now written to congratulate me upon an article by John Bailey when To Lotty "No one but you, Virginia, could have written it!" When the old talk they are very alarming. Old Mr Cornish talked too.

Write, even a post card, to say how you are, & whether I shall send you anything — a hot water bottle, or a bit of pudding? NYPL

yr p-S.

POST CARD

LONDON N.W

12. 15 AM

DEC 6 098

Mrs Dickinson

21 Manchester St

W.

NYPL

29. Finsbury Sq. W.

Friday would be delightful. I think Adrian arrives from America on Tuesday, if the Mauretania isn't late.

I suppose Quaker is E, & trust God that our natural beauty will suffice.

V. S.

I.

Lelant Hotel
Lelant.
Cornwall.

Dec. 27th 1909

My Violet.

I meant to stay in London, but rushed off here on the spur of the moment. The idea came to me at 12.30 - & the train left at 1. Accordingly I am less competent, as regards underclothes & shoes, than usual. Maud packs old

amethyst necklace, but forgets
pocket handkerchief. The
landladies husband had to lend
me his watch key, & I borrow
pencils & stamps. However
it has been quite worth it.
There is no one else in the hotel,
& all the festivities have passed
over my head without a trace.
I have been tramping about the
country, & dabbling in the
Atlantic. It is as soft as
spring, & at ten o'clock at
night I sit with my window
open; old farmers are saying
"good night," & calling the weather
dirty beneath me. How any

cus, with an immortal soul can live
island, I cant imagine; only clods &
animals should be able to endure it.
'Es for news, I have none — only
Saturday's paper, with lists of
preachers in London. Was
Lady Hester Stanhope an Aunt of
yours, or a friend of your Aunts?
I have to write about her, & spend
my time reading, not a silly new
book by a woman called Rowdell,
but the old diaries written by her
Doctor, which keep me intensely happy.
She seem to have been an insolent
noble aristocrat, not unlike Beatrice,
only crazed about the Messeah,
& the Stars; with a passion for
conversation. She was a niece of
Pitt's, & talks of Miss — Eden,
who was to have married him, &
how she peeped at her at church. &

& she was beautiful as an angel.
Families lose their features
terribly " What have you
been doing? I meant to buy you
a Christmas present, but forgot;
the truth is, I was on my way to
buy it, when I had the idea of
coming to Cornwall, & that took
all my money. It shall be now
for the new year. I did set for a
Card, only lent it to Sophia instead.
It was a wave, breaking on a
promontory.

NYPL

I start early to-morrow, & leave
all this - It is very melancholy
to be shut up in London again.
Only the delights of human intercourse
reconcile me to it. Can you
coming to tea - or are you staying
in great houses? I suppose you
see many sides of life.

Yrs

1909?

29. F. Sq.

Saturday.

My Violet.

Here is a nice pleasant tawny old book, which I daresay ya has, for already, or won't read anyhow. If so, do send it me back. I got it from an old Jew, who always spends an hour or so in discourse with me; & we stroke ca the venerable backs, & discuss title pages which he can read, whatever the language, & print, & the degeneracy of people who buy new books, & all sorts of interesting subjects. Even Scipian Shandy 'no one would wish for a complete set - I myself have never read it through, though I take it up often' - So it dont matter that the book is without a title page, & 3 sheets of introduction: it is white as driven snow within, & attired like a ripe fiddle. "Hers for a pound with a farden, he said; who likes sallets - sallads you understand" that is the amount. This learning. So my good woman - this is a specimen of my narrative Style, which is far from good, seeing that I am forever knotting it & twisting it in - conformity with the coils in my

own brain, a narrative should be an elastic -
flexible as the line for sketch between pear tree,
with poor brain a drying — I felt in my
pocket & counted out meagre silver pieces, -
from copper, which felt short, as I piled them
in a row on the table. So he forgave me
the rest, magnanimously, as between scholar.
Shall now after some conversation between us,
I have never read the book, but like snatches,
it is going down to Welwyn, where it shall
live among trees.
I have finished this beautiful discourse; - I dont
think I have another to begin on. Last night
I died out in Chelsea, & marked the dead -
rotten carcases of several work written by my
friends; how I hate intellect! Then were several
brilliant young men, whose light had been kindled
at Cambridge, & burnt ab them precisely in the
same way; & some said they were artificial, ruffled
by the country, & to much for cabs. You turn
them off, when Company isnt there, to prevent
waste; & you know what you have spent, to a penny.
An elderly man who had somehow for my name
meigat, said to me "In the course of your life
miss Stephen, you must have known many
distinguished people. Stevenson, I suppose?"
Yes & George Eliot, & Tennyson to the last grew a head

I said. But the astonishing thing is that these
great people always talked much as you & I
talk; Tennyson, for instance, would say to me,
"Pass the salt" or "Thank you for the butter".
"Ah indeed; you should write your memoirs; one
get paid for that kind of thing" he said; being -
Dealer in pictures.
At this moment I should be cobbling a terrific
passage in my article on Lady Faughlewa;
which begins replete & turn quadruped in the
middle. If only my flights were longer, & less
variable I should make solid blocks of sentences,
Carrara & wrongat from pure marble; or the
Greek marble which absorbs colour. One of my
disasters is that I have lost that green book
in which I used to write when the Bug Lady
left me. But as I was telling you, a spread on
Faughlewa is rather disappointing: only a spread on
Harry, & some amateur descendant has stood a
volume of Dry little notes to her tail: & the
Times say they must have my article at once,
& that flurries me - so instead of writing it
I write to you.
All the money I earned last month I threw
away in an Londsful to Katharine Horne; who
with sniffs & turns gifts to the last decal
Spray of diamonds. I got her a nice old looking-glass,

NYPL

with Lady Dolphin naked to the waist clasping
arms round it. She is something ? a sea green
mermaid herself, so I gave it her: half the
hours in beneath a sliding tide – O damn the
ice it's in this English language! – remote &
Lady Dim.
On Monday Lady Swendolen
Godolphin Osborne comes to lunch. "Mrs Dickinson
told me I might call; but I didn't dare. Now
I may come, invited, I shall love it." Are
these human or mermaid manners? "Lady
Swendolen, I shall say, how was the Queen looking
at the Ball the other night?" I gazed
through tanks of carriages driving home from
Chelsea; & tried to imagine splendours. but
all the coachmen were smoking pipes & reading
pink papers; & I could see no higher than
Mrs. & Lady Margaret Duckworth, who were there;
magpies under the Ladies – Stage under the
Mrs.
Is this a nice long happy intelligent
letter, for me to have written on a hot summer
morning, standing at my desk, looking at ancient
grey stone, & a cat that claps her paws
upon a white butterfly. & pen rolls over & sleeps
again:
When shall you have fun pleasure, as Ly.
G.G.O. would say, of seeing me?

L.